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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Citizens Advisory Board Launches First Board Meetings

KANKAKEE, IL - (September 30, 2020) – The City of Kankakee’s Citizens Advisory Board (CAB) held their first two orientation meetings for new board members in August and September. The CAB is a 22-person volunteer board comprised of citizens residing in Kankakee with a few seats for representatives of Kankakee agencies that address issues of quality of life for Kankakee residents. Currently, there are 13 members of the CAB and the Economic and Community Development Agency (ECDA) is still taking applications to fill the remaining nine positions available.

The CAB will explore challenges in the community and identify solutions, assist in the planning process for the ECDA, provide insight into local citizen discussions and meetings, and promote better public dissemination of information regarding land use, housing needs, and transportation needs. The CAB will be a place to represent your community, ward, organization, or business while also holding the City of Kankakee accountable to the ECDA’s goals and strategies.

“To assure the City’s efforts are impactful and resources are being appropriately utilized, having a Citizens Advisory Board (CAB) is essential. The City will continue to seek input from the community and listen to feedback from residents so that our community drives the direction of both policy and practice. I appreciate those who have volunteered to serve the community in this capacity and look forward to meaningful outcomes for our City,”

said Mayor Wells-Armstrong.

Currently, the Citizens Advisory Board is made up of the following citizens:

- Patricia Santoyo-Marin
- Sasha Wilde
- Jose da Silva
- Travis Miller
- Kim Bacon
- Linh Williams
- Angela Shea
- Courtney Casteel
- Kelly Johnson
- Morissa Decker
- Michael Maloney
- Genevra Walters
- Judy Todnem

During the two orientation meetings, the board members completed an activity sharing with others why they joined the CAB or what they would like to see for Kankakee. Some of their responses included:

- Police walking the neighborhoods
- More focus on demolition or occupancy of abandoned homes
- Support to local or small businesses
- Inclusive language, marketing, services, and programs
- More youth and family-friendly activities
- More affordable housing
- Better walking and biking paths
- More community engagement by aldermen and alderwomen
- More residential development in 1st, 2nd, 5th, and 7th Wards and a grocery store in the 1st, 5th, and 7th Wards

- More suicide prevention and mental health awareness
- City-wide cultural celebrations
- A comprehensive safety plan
- Strategies and solutions for the homeless situation
- Access to free healthcare screenings

Overall, many of the CAB members shared that they joined the board to stay involved in the community or to represent their ward or organization. If you would like to read more of the answers collected, you can watch previous CAB meetings through the City's website or find the minutes on the ECDA web page under the "Meeting Information" tab. If you would like to apply to be a part of the Citizens Advisory Board, please go to the following link: <https://ecda.citykankakee-il.gov/cab-app.php>. For more information on the CAB, please go to the following link: https://citykankakee-il.gov/post_custom.php?s=2020-04-23-the-economic-and-community-development-agency-office-opens-application-for-citizens-advisory-board-cab.

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About the Economic and Community Development Agency (ECDA):

The Kankakee Economic and Community Development (ECDA) is a local government agency whose mission is to improve the lives of Kankakee residents and enhance the economic vitality of communities through housing, economic development and community development. The ECDA administers programs that serve the neighborhoods and residents of the City of Kankakee provided by federal, state and local funding. For more information, contact ECDA at 815-933-0506, Monday – Friday between 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. Visit our website at <https://ecda.citykankakee-il.gov/>.

About the City of Kankakee, Illinois:

The City of Kankakee is dedicated to protecting, building and nurturing the community while enhancing lives. We are a historic, vibrant and active riverfront community. We continue to transform into an extraordinary place to dream, grow and thrive. Embracing our diversity, we strive to be progressive, inclusive and innovative. For more information on the City of Kankakee, please visit the website at www.citykankakee-il.gov.